

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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FM AMEMBASSY LIMA

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EO 11652: NA

TAGS: PINT, PE

SUBJECT: STUDENT/POLICE CLASHES IN LIMA

SUMMARY: SEEMINGLY SMALL SCALE HIGH SCHOOL SIT-IN WAS FORCEFULLY PUT DOWN OCTOBER 22 BY LIMA POLICE. THERE FOLLOWED SERIES OF HIGH SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY STUDENT PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS - MARCHES, STONINGS, ASSEMBLIES AND SIT-INS - WHICH BY GOP ADMISSION INVOLVED SEVERAL THOUSAND PERSONS. ADDITIONAL FORCEFUL MEASURES WERE TAKEN TO DISPERSE THESE SPILLOVER CROWDS RESULTING IN FIFTY-ONE ARRESTS, SEVERAL INJURED STUDENTS, AND SIX INJURED POLICE. THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR HAS BLAMED THE TROUBLES ON IRRESPONSIBLE TEACHERS IN THE NATIONAL TEACHERS' UNION (SUTEP). INTERIOR HAS CALLED FOR END OF STREET ACTION AND PROMISED TO CONTINUE TO INTERVENT "TO MAINTAIN PUBLIC ORDER AND PROTECT THE RIGHT TO PROPERTY". END SUMMARY.

1. MORNING PRESS OCTOBER 23 REPORTED IN BRIEF, INSIDE STORIES THAT ASSULT POLICE HAD TO USE TEAR GAS, RAMMING TRUCK, FIRE HOSES, AND RUBBER CLUBS WHILE EVICTING 150 SECONDARY STUDENTS WHO HAD OCCUPIED PORTION OF STATE-OWNED AND ABANDONED SALT FACTORY IN BARRIO OF LIMA. STUDENTS SAID THEY STAGED SIT-IN IN ORDER TO PROTEST INDIFFERENCE OF AUTHORITIES TO CRAMPED

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AND NOISY QUARTERS OF THEIR SCHOOL, THE CO-EDUCATIONAL COLLEGE

OF SAN MARTIN DE PORRES, WHOSE 5,000 STUDENTS USE ONE PART OF THE FORMER SALT PLANT. PRESS WAS CONFUSED ON DETAILS OF DISTURBANCES. PRENSA SAID MAOISTS WERE TO BLAME. CORREO TENDEDO TO BLAME APRISTAS. "COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARIES" WERE COMMON WHIPPING BOY. PRESS DID NOT NOTE ANY CASUALTIES ALTHOUGH IT REPORTED THAT STUDENTS TOSSED BRICKS AT POLICEWHILE THE DOOR OF THE SALT PLANT WAS BEING RAMMED DOWN BY A TRUCK. ALL DAILIES HINTED THAT POLICE FEAR OF SYMPATHY PROTESTS BY OTHER STUDENTS PRECIPITATED USE OF FORCE IN CLEARING PROPERTY.

2. PRESS OF OCTOBER 24 MOVED STUDENT DISTURBANCES TO FRONT PAGE HEADLINES. USING MINISTRY OF INTERIOR REPORT, LIMA DAILIES REPORTED AT LEAST ELEVEN OTHER MAJOR CONFRONTATIONS BETWEEN POLICE AND STUDENTS FOLLOWING EVICTION OF HIHG SCHOOL STUDENTS. INITIAL CONFRONTATION INVOLVED ONLY SECONDARY STUDENTS, WHILE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ENTERED IN LATER EPISODES. SEVERAL STREET MARCHES OCCURRED IN POOR DISTRICTS OF RIMAC AND SAN MARTIN DE PORRES WHERE SECONDARY SCHOOLS ARE LOCATED, ALTHOUGH THERE WERE INCIDENTS AT UNIVERSITIES AS WELL. POLICE ALSO REPORTED SOME HUNDREDS WERE DISPERSED EVENING OCTOBER 23 FROM DOWNTOWN PLAZA SAN MARTIN. POLICE CHARGE THAT STUDENT MARCHERS BROKE MANY WINDOWS IN VARIOUS PARTS OF CITY, DAMAGED VEHICLES, AND BLOCKED TRAFFIC. TEAR GAS WAS USED IN SEVERAL AREAS. A FEW DTUDENTS AND SIX POLICE ARE HOSPITALIZED.

3. THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR COMMUNIQUE, WHICH IS THE BASIS FOR ALL REPORTING IN THE PRESS, BLAMED TROUBLES ON IRRESPONSIBLE TEACHERS WHO ARE MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL TEACHERS' UNION (SUTEP). GOP ACCUSED THESE TEACHERS OF PLANNING, ORGANIZING AND DIRECTING SERIES OF EVENTS. ALSO CALLED UPON ALL INVOLVED AND GENERAL CITIZENRY TO ABSTAIN FROM PARTICIPATING IN THREATS AGAINST THE PUBLIC ORDER AND PROMISED THAT POLICE FORCES WOULD PRESERVE PRIVATE AND STATE PROPERTY.

4. COMMENT: OFFICIAL COMMUNIQUE HAS DESCRIBED STUDENT INCIDENTS AS THREATS TO PUBLIC ORDER WITHOUT MAKING IDEOLOGICAL ACCUSATIONS. PRESS, HOWEVER, HAS POLITICIZED EVENTS, USING THEM IN ATTEMPT TO DISCREDIT TWO FAVORITE TARGETS:
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EXTREME LEFT AND APRISTAS. WHILE EXTREME LEFT IS IN CONTROL OF SUTEP NATIONALLY AS WELL AS OF MANY STUDENT GROUPS, THE PRESENT DISTURBANCES ALSO HAVE STRONG ELEMENTS OF ACADEMIC PROTEST AND FRUSTRATION. PLACARDS CARRIED BY STUDENTS ON THE STREETS SAID: "WE WANT TO STUDY, MORALES WON'T LET US", "MORALES THE ASSASSIN, HAS KILLED TWO STUDENTS", "MORE SPACE FOR OUR SCHOOLS". THESE SUGGEST POLITICAL TROUBLE FOR GOP, BUT NOT NECESSARILY OF IDEOLOGICAL GENESIS.

5. ALTHOUGH THE STUDENT SCENE HAS BEEN RESTELSS IN PERU BECAUSE OF INADEQUATE FACILITIES AND INSTRUCTION AND INTENSE MARXIST ORIENTATION OF SOME SCHOOLS, THIS IS THE FIRST MAJOR BREAKOUT OF ORGANIZED PROTEST IN RECENT MEMORY. THE FEBRUARY 1975 RIOTS INVOLVED MUCH SMALLER NUMBERS OF STUDENTS THAN EVENTS OF LAST FORTY-EIGHT HOURS AND WERE OF A DIFFERENT ORIGIN. STUDENT ACTION CONSTITUTES CHALLENGE TO GOP FOR SEVERAL REASONS: STUDENTS HAVE REAL GRIEVANCES AND INSIST ON SOLUTIONS; THEY ARE RELATIVELY IMPERVIOUS TO REVOLUTIONARY IDEOLOGY AS A BLAM; THEY SEEM TO BE ORGANIZED; AND NOW THEY ARE ANGRY. NEGOTIATIONS WOULD APPEAR TO BE IN ORDER BUT THEY ARE DIFFICULT FOR GOP. THE MILITARY OFFICERS WHO HAVE AUTHORITY USUALLY LACK BOTH EXPERTISE AND SYMPATHETIC ATTITUDES IN EDUCATION MATTERS; MANY OFTHOSE WITH THE KNOWLEDGE - TEACHERS AND STAFF - LACK REAL AUTHORITY TO SOLVE PROBLEMS. POLICE IN LIMA ARE CONTINUING ON ALERT AND GOP APPEARS CONFIDENT THAT STUDENTS CAN BE CONTROLLED. WE THINK THAT COULD PROVE A DEMANDING TASK FOR MILITARY AUTHORITY IN THIS PHASE TWO OF REVOLUTION.

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